and, in time, can amount to huge expenditures. A large and complex reconstruction would require the additional interpretive staff to explain the site to the public. The site would also have to be maintained, thus requiring an increased maintenance workload. A large and well-built structure could also attract more visitors and, therefore, create pressure for additional development. More importantly, an increased land acquisition, a larger visitor center, expanded maintenance facilities, and additional parking facilities.

All of this absorbs funds which could better be used for the preservation of authentic historic sites, for the conservation of our 40,000,000 historic objects that are in dire need of professional attention, and for critically needed research. The National Park Service has only original cultural resources which are in need of preservation. In the words of Representative JoAnn Emerson in the House of Representatives, "the Service has original cultural resources which are in need of preservation. In the years that we have studied the needs for reconstructions and associated activities (totalling approximately 1,000,000 in the current five-year program) could be considered in direct conflict with the spirit and intent of the Organic Act.

Without question, the issue of National Park Service involvement with reconstructions is frequently political in resources. In all instances, the Service is obligated to administer sites which were reconstructed by a separate private or public organization. Moreover, often the Service is "encouraged" to erect a "new" historic structure under local political pressure. Seldom, however, do Park Service representatives make articulate, sustained, and persuasive arguments against proposed reconstructions. Although reconstructions should be considered only when "all prudent and feasible alternatives to reconstruction have been considered" (Management Policies V-17), proposals to reproduce a historic structure are regularly introduced and accepted with little, if any, consideration of the alternatives.

The gradual accretion of reconstructions under Park Service management tends to detract from the Service's truly significant and authentic cultural resources. Reconstructions, regardless of ownership, are not unique. Any private or public organization can erect a "historic structure." Indeed, reconstructed historic villages are proliferating across the United States. As a commercial enterprise, history can be, and is, big business. As these reconstructions increase, the distinction between authentic survivors of the past and reconstructed structures of the past becomes less clear. The Park Service's collection of material, original, and nationally significant cultural resources would be confused and watered down by the continued addition of unique, nonhistoric reconstructions.

While the "Williamsburg syndrome" constituted the popular approach to historic preservation for several decades following 1927, the preservation community at large, both in the United States and in Europe, has grown to recognize the inadvisability of recreating our structural past. Organizations ranging from the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Conservation of Cultural Property in Rome, Italy, and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities have long acknowledged that reconstructions tend to detract from the "precision of fantasy into objects of the past." The authors of "From Past to Present" in the report of the Special Committee on Historic Preservation, which presented its findings and recommendations upon which the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was based, specifically introduced in their professional preservationists' attitudes toward reconstructions by labeling them "expensive life-size toys, manufactured for children of all ages who have forgotten how to read."

The report goes on to observe that "They may be effective instruments of education or some kind of special pleading, but they have precious little to do with beautiful past. As a result, the Park Service misses the public in their effort to understand past life styles. The contemplation of ruins, foundations, and other incomplete architectural remnants from the past, when assisted by historic photographs, drawings, scale models, and accounts from contemporary diaries, journals, and newspapers, can usually evoke a much more accurate sense of the past than reconstructions which often stray from the reality of their efforts to pass on to modern aesthetic tastes and sensibilities.

Reconstructions are very expensive. Their costs include planning, extensive interpretation, and reconstruction itself. Added to this are the costs of furnishing a new structure, acquisition of land, acquisition of the site's original artifact, and of equipment. These objects must be served and, therefore, must compete with many significant objects already in the Service's possession for which very limited curatorial funds exist.

To the expense of reconstruction are added the increased costs of interpretation, maintenance, and indeed, big business. As a commercial enterprise, history can be, and is, big business. As these reconstructions increase, the distinction between authentic survivors of the past and reconstructed structures of the past becomes less clear. The Park Service's collection of material, original, and nationally significant cultural resources would be confused and watered down by the continued addition of unique, nonhistoric reconstructions.

In short, with its continued interest in reconstruction, the National Park Service has not kept pace with changing trends in historic preservation. The "Williamsburg syndrome"—a phrase that has become more sophisticated in approach, more sensitive to and appropriate of original historic fabric, and increasingly more in tune with the original intent of the 1916 Organic Act—has in part been ignored in the current and future generations. Nevertheless, there is no mandate to recreate vanished historic structures. Traditionally, the Service has supported the reconstruction of numerous historical structures because they are built with modern techniques, and because they possess structural links to the past, reconstructions are marked with an absence of historic integrity and increasingly more in tune with modern aesthetic tastes and sensibilities.

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